

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

1 - 18 (Canceled)

19. (New) A dishwasher comprising:
at least one washing container for retaining items to be washed, the washing container having a heat damping layer which at least partially surrounds the washing container and the heat damping layer having a variable thermal conductivity in that the heat damping layer can be adjusted between at least a first thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a first rate and a second thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a second rate different than the first rate.
20. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 19, wherein the variable heat damping layer includes a closed capsule containing hydrogen in which at least one metal hydride grid is arranged, which can form a chemical compound with the hydrogen and thus bind the hydrogen.
21. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 20, wherein the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has a selected one of a pressed glass and a non-pressed glass fibre core that is surrounded by a gastight jacket made of a selected one of a stainless steel sheet and a non-stainless steel sheet.
22. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 20, wherein the capsule of the variable heat damping layer is operable to function at a temperature of at least about 300°C

when heated by a selected one of electrical heating means and non-electrical heating means.

23. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 20, wherein the heat damping layer is configured such that heating of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has the effect that the hydrogen previously bound in the metal hydride grid is released, the pressure in the capsule of the variable heat damping layer increases, and the thermal conductivity of at least one of the capsule and the entire heat damping layer is increased.
24. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 20, wherein the heat damping layer is configured such that cooling of the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has the effect that the free hydrogen is resorbed with the metal hydride grid in a chemical compound, the pressure in the capsule of the variable heat damping layer drops, and the thermal conductivity of at least one of the capsule and the entire heat damping layer is decreased.
25. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 20, wherein the capsule of the variable heat damping layer has an internal pressure of about 0.01 mbar at room temperature and an internal pressure of about 50 mbar at a temperature of about 300°C.
26. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 19, wherein the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer is continuously adjustable to an arbitrary thermal conductivity value between the first and second thermal conductivity value.
27. (New) The dishwasher according to according to claim 20, wherein the power of the current applied to the electrical heating means can be continuously regulated and thus the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer can be

adjusted to any thermal conductivity value approximately in a range between $0.3 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$ and $10 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$.

28. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 19, wherein the variable heat damping layer is in heat-conducting contact with a wall of the washing container and with an outer wall of the dishwasher.
29. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 19, wherein the variable heat damping layer is disposed in a selected one of a side wall and a door of the dishwasher.
30. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 19, wherein the variable heat damping layer is disposed in a selected one of the top and the bottom of the dishwasher.
31. (New) The dishwasher according to claim 19, wherein a wall of the washing container bounding the interior of the washing container is at least partially configured as a condensing surface made of flexible material, comprising at least one of a plastic film, a metal film having a selected one of an aluminium component and a non-aluminum component, and a material that is not a plastic film or a metal film.
32. (New) A method for cleaning and drying items that have been disposed in a dishwasher, the dishwasher having at least one washing container for retaining items to be washed, the washing container having a heat damping layer which at least partially surrounds the washing container and the heat damping layer having a variable thermal conductivity in that the heat damping layer can be adjusted between at least a relatively lower thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a first rate and a relatively higher thermal conductivity value at which thermal conductivity through the heat damping proceeds at a second rate higher than the first rate, the dishwasher having a heat generating means for generating heat in the washing container, and

the dishwasher being operable to execute at least one washing program comprising the following steps, the method comprising the steps of:

in coordination with the execution of a first section of a washing program during which thermal energy is built up in the washing container by the heat generating means, disposing the heat damping layer at the relatively lower thermal conductivity value such that the thermal energy built up in the washing container is substantially preserved in the washing container; and

in coordination with the execution of a second section of the washing program during which a drying process is carried out, disposing the heat damping layer at the relatively higher thermal conductivity value such that at least some of the thermal energy present in the washing container succeeds to the surroundings via the heat damping layer.

33. (New) The method according to claim 32, wherein before or during a washing process, a clear rinsing process or during a first section of the drying process the variable heat damping layer is adjusted to a low thermal conductivity and thermal energy is built up in the washing container by heat generating means, and during the drying process or during the second section of the drying process the variable heat damping layer is adjusted to a high thermal conductivity.
34. (New) The method according to claim 32, wherein the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer is regulated by the program control of the dishwasher.
35. (New) The method according to claim 32, wherein the thermal conductivity of the variable heat damping layer is regulated preferably by electric heating means used to heat the variable heat damping layer.

36. (New) The method according to claim 32, wherein water deposited during the drying process in the washing container is passed from the washing container via at least one of discharge via a sump of the dishwasher, discharge via a discharge pump, and discharge via a means other than a sump or a discharge pump of the dishwasher.

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